

Bonding 101: Cagemate Adoptions



Choosing Candidates

- You may be drawn to certain breeds, colors, or personalities when choosing a pet, but when choosing a bond candidate, it is more important to find the right fit for your current pet.
- Opposite sex bonds are typically easier. EARPS spays and neuters all rabbits, rats, and guinea pigs and neuters male sugar gliders, chinchillas, and mice whenever possible.
- You should provide your adoption coordinator with as much information about your pet's personality as possible to assist in finding the right candidates.

First Intros

- EARPS is happy to assist with initial introductions. You should bring your current pet to the meet & greet appointment.
- We will set up a small area in neutral territory for your pet to meet adoption candidates.
- The first introduction should be no more than five minutes – just long enough to see if their personalities will mesh.
- We can do a second introduction of no more than ten minutes, after a short break. You can use this time to let your pet have a calm break in the carrier while you get to know your future pet.
- Initial introductions should be short to prevent animals from getting stressed and lashing out at one another.
- If all goes well, we can start a trial adoption for you to continue bonding at home.

Bonding at Home

- Once you take your new pet home, you should get them settled in their temporary cage then let them adjust for a few days before continuing bond work.
- Begin introductions on neutral territory, similar to the initial meet & greet.

- Watch for warning signs such as teeth chattering, negative vocalizing, and chasing.
- Humping is a normal part of the bonding process as pets determine dominance and hierarchy.
- Grooming, positive vocalizing, and food sharing are all very good signs.
- Return pets to their personal space before they get stressed enough to fight.
- Play dates should get longer and longer each time, until your pets can spend an entire day together.

Tips & Tricks

- Keep a dust pan handy for quickly separating your pets without accidentally being injured yourself.
- Save favorite treats for bonding sessions, to associate the play dates with a positive reinforcement.
- As you get closer to moving your pets to one cage, consider a cage swap without cleaning to better acclimate each animal to the other's scent.

Move-In Day

- While your pets are in a neutral territory, you should deep clean & disinfect the cage you want them to share.
- Consider new toys, hides, and bedding that will not smell like either pet.
- Provide separate food and water dishes to prevent territory disputes.
- Keep in mind that some pets may only ever peacefully coexist, and that's okay too. They will still get plenty of socialization benefits, even if they do not become good friends.

Ongoing Support

- EARPS will stay with you through the process.
- Stay in contact with your adoption coordinator as bonding progresses.
- Feel free to send videos if you would like our input on what you're seeing.
- Don't hesitate to reach out at any time throughout the life of your pet for assistance or to provide updates, photos, and Happy Tails!